

14. The preparation of claim 9 wherein the active ingredient(s) is/are selected from the group consisting of esters of bile acids and ethers of bile acids.

15. The preparation of claim 9 wherein the active ingredient(s) is/are chosen from the groups consisting of:

- (a) salts of bile acids, wherein said salt is an alkali metal or alkaline earth metal salt;
- (b) salts of mono- or di-valent cations of the transition elements, lanthanide series elements and actinide series elements;
- (c) salts of ammonium, alkanolammonium derivatives having 2 to 9 carbon atoms total, alkyl- and alkenylammonium derivatives having 1 to 22 carbon atoms total and pyridine which is optionally substituted by an alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 18 carbon atoms;
- (d) salts of basic amino acids.

16. A method of strengthening the barrier function of the skin which comprises of administering an barrier strengthening effective amount of the preparation of any one of claim 8-1

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| REMARKS |
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Claims 1-7 have been cancelled and claims 8-14 have been added. It is believed that no new matter has been added. The new claims have been submitted so as to better conform with U.S. practices.

Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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Attachments: Information Disclosure Statement (Form 1449)

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that the foregoing Preliminary Amendment is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Hon. Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on the date indicated below:

Date: May 31, 2001

By Howard C. Lee
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